

Queer Bashing in Vancouver: A Prospective Cohort Study

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Background

Hate-Bias Crime

- Criminal offense motivated by hate, prejudice or bias committed against a person (70%) or property (30%).
- **Targets identifiable group** based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or similar factor.
- **Harm is Disproportionate**
 - Target an intrinsic component of self-concept
 - Threat is experienced by a wider community
- **What is known?**
 - **Prevalence**
 - Victimization surveys: yield a broad range of estimates
 - **Incidence**
 - No prospective studies
 - **Risk Factors**
 - No prospective studies

Study Objectives

1. Measure the prevalence (at enrollment), incidence (during follow-up), and risk factors for self-reported queer bashing
2. Estimate the (cumulative) probability of being bashed during extended follow-up
3. Measure the potential relation between incident queer bashing and *change* in depression and self-esteem scores

Study Population

VANGUARD PROJECT (1996 - 2003)

- Prospective study of HIV seronegative men
- 15-30 years old
- Live in greater Vancouver area
- No previous HIV+ test result
- Self-identify as gay/bisexual or ever having had sex with other men

QUEER BASHING ASSESSMENT

-Annual, self-administered questionnaires asked:

"During the past year have you been physically abused - hit, punched, or beaten up ... because you are gay, bisexual, or transgendered, or because someone thought you were?"

Methods

OBJECTIVE 1

PREVALENCE

- Categorical analysis: X^2 , Fisher's exact, Wilcoxon rank-sum tests
- Unadjusted and adjusted odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals to identify correlates of previous bashing

INCIDENCE

- Assume date of bashing is midpoint between study visits (unbiased)
- Rates of queer bashing: number accounts / person-years (Stukel method for computing 95% confidence intervals)
- Rate ratios, hazard ratios with 95% confidence intervals
- Correlates of incident bashing: Cox PH models (with time-dependent sex-trade, injection drug use, unstable housing variables)

OBJECTIVE 2

Cumulative probability of being bashed during follow-up: Life-table methods

OBJECTIVE 3

Change in depressive symptoms (CES-D), self-esteem (Rosenberg) scores

- Each incident case matched for calendar year and season with (up to 4) controls
- ANCOVA models to test for differences between cases and controls adjusted for age, previous score

Results

Eligible (N=614)

OBJECTIVE 1

Prevalence at enrollment: 101 / 607 (16.6%)

Independent Correlates of Previous Bashing

	OR	(95% CI)
Previous sex trade involvement	2.58	(1.56 – 4.27)
History of forced/coerced sex	2.44	(1.48 – 4.03)
Age of "coming out"	1.09	(1.03 – 1.15)

Incidence

Median follow-up: 39 (IQR 24, 66) months

-total 2,126 person-years of observation

-58 accounts of queer bashing

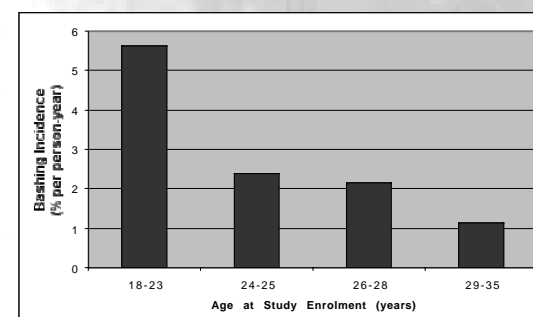
-50 unique individuals (8.1%)

Bashing incidence: 2.6% (1.9 - 3.3) per person-year

Independent Correlates of Incident Bashing

	RR	(95% CI)
First Nations (vs White/Other) Ethnicity	2.2	(1.1 – 4.4)
Age	0.83	(0.8 – 0.9)

Annual Incidence of Queer Bashing, By Age at Enrollment



OBJECTIVE 2

Cumulative probability of being bashed by:

12 months follow-up: 4.3%

36 months follow-up: 7.6%

72 months follow-up: 11.3%

OBJECTIVE 3

Change in depressive symptoms and self-esteem scores in relation to being bashed during follow-up **not significant**

	Pre-Bash Study Visit Mean (\pm SD)	Pre-Post Score Difference Mean (\pm SD)	Age Adjusted P-value
Self-esteem score			0.17
Men bashed	31.19 (5.63)	- 0.56 (3.47)	
Controls	32.61 (5.65)	- 0.01 (4.99)	
Depressive symptoms score			0.56
Men Bashed	8.65 (5.37)	- 0.08 (4.79)	
Controls	6.03 (5.32)	+ 0.05 (4.97)	

Summary

- **Strong age-dependence in bashing prevalence (age "came out") and incidence (age at enrollment)**
- **Significant elevated risk among First Nations men (RR = 2.2)**

Conclusions

- Patterns of risk support the call to improve the safety of sexual minority youth in schools and in the community
- Incorporation of bashing assessment into large, prospective studies of gay men appears feasible
- Youth may represent appropriate population for initial research pertaining to risk factors and mitigation of possible sequelae related to bashing